

THE I, ME, I, I, PROBLEM

SPEAK OF JESUS CHRIST AND NOT OF YOURSELF.

WHY A MEN'S GROUP EXISTS: TO EXALT CHRIST!

THE PURPOSE OF A MEN'S GROUP:

A Christian men's group is not a social club, a networking event, or a place to compare résumés. It exists for one reason: To help men draw closer to God, together.

“As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another” (Proverbs 27:17).

That only happens when men are honest about their weaknesses in a room where Christ, not their own performance is the standard being lifted up. When that order gets reversed — when men start lifting up themselves instead of Him — the whole purpose of the group collapses.

Safety is the soil everything else grows in. Men carry years of learned silence—messages that vulnerability is weakness, that struggle should be hidden, that a real man handles it alone.

A Christian men's group only becomes transformative when it breaks that pattern by offering something rare: a room where a man can say the true thing and not be met with judgment, fixing, or quiet disappointment. When trust is present, confession stops feeling like exposure and starts feeling like relief. Men begin naming the affair they had or almost had, the addiction they're still fighting, the anger they can't control at home, the doubt they're afraid will unravel their faith—not because the group demanded it, but because they finally believe it's safe to. James 5:16 ties this directly to healing: “confess your sins to one another... so that you may be healed.”

THE GOSPEL

Everything in the group exists to talk about comes down to this: God became man. He was falsely tried, beaten, scourged, and humiliated. Christ Jesus was forced to carry His own cross to the place of His execution, and He was crucified. Jesus died, was buried, and on the third day He rose from the dead, defeating death itself.

After His resurrection He taught His disciples and appeared to more than five hundred people, many of whom were still alive to testify to it when the New Testament was

written (1 Corinthians 15:3-8). That is the message. Everything said in a men's group should, in some way, point back to it.

WHY WE SPEAK OF JESUS CHRIST IN THE THIRD PERSON

There's a pattern worth noticing in how the apostle Paul talked about his own spiritual experience. In 2 Corinthians 12, when Paul had something worth boasting about — a genuine encounter with God — he didn't say "I." He shifted to the third person: "I knew a man in Christ." Bible teacher Alistair Begg has pointed out that Paul does this deliberately. He doesn't want to parade the experience in a way that draws attention to himself, because he's already told the Corinthians that whoever boasts should boast in the Lord (1 Corinthians 1:31). It's an expression of humility — Paul had something remarkable happen to him, and his instinct was to get himself out of the spotlight and put God in it.

That's the model for how men should talk in a group like this. When a man shares what God has done, the story should center on Christ's mercy, not on the man's own strength, wisdom, or spiritual maturity. There's one legitimate exception: describing what Christ did for you personally — your testimony — is not boasting. That's proclamation. The line gets crossed when the story quietly becomes about how well you've handled it, how disciplined you've become, or how far you've come compared to other men in the room.

Billy Graham lived this out publicly. Near the end of his life he said plainly that he wasn't counting on himself for his salvation — not on his years of preaching, not on how many people he'd reached — but entirely on Christ. "I'm going to Heaven because of what Christ did," he said. Here was a man who preached to more people face-to-face than anyone in history, and his own summary of himself was that he was a sinner saved by grace who belonged in the gutter with everyone else, not on a pedestal above them.

THE "I, ME, I, I" PROBLEM

Most men have sat in a group where one man talks and every sentence starts with "I." I did this. I overcame that. I've never struggled with this the way you have. Even when the content sounds spiritual, that pattern of speech is a warning sign.

Scripture is direct about it: "Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me" (Jeremiah 9:23-24).

This isn't just a matter of tone — it has a real effect on the men listening. When one man presents himself as having it all together, the men around him don't feel challenged; they

feel ashamed. They quietly decide the group isn't a safe place to admit they're still fighting an addiction, still angry at their father, still struggling in their marriage, still doubting. A men's group that no longer has men willing to be honest about their struggles has stopped functioning as a men's group at all — it's become a stage.

FEEDING AND BEING FED

The purpose of speech in a men's group is to feed and be fed — to strengthen and build one another up in Christ (1 Thessalonians 5:11, Ephesians 4:29). That only happens in an atmosphere where Christ is the hero of every story, not the individual man telling it.

Galatians 6:14 puts words to the posture every man in the room should have: the only thing worth boasting in is the cross of Christ Jesus — not our recovery, not our knowledge, not our track record, but the redemptive power and incredible love of God *and His sacrifice*.

As stated previously, and worth mentioning again; James 5:16 tells us to confess our sins to one another and pray for one another, so that we may be healed. That verse only works *if* the room is safe — and the room is only safe when no one is competing to look strong or superior. Also see, Matthew 6:1.

A group where every man is quietly trying to out-testify the last guy is not a room where healing happens. A group where every man is pointing past himself, to what Christ endured and what Christ is still doing, this is where men grow, strengthen, build and get healed. There is tremendous power in a men's group.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Never exalt yourself. Exalt Christ, and Christ alone — with the one exception of telling what He has done for you. Speak the way Paul spoke about his own encounter with God: get yourself out of the center of the story. Speak the way Billy Graham spoke about his own life: not on a pedestal, but as one more man depending entirely on what Christ did on the cross. That's what makes it possible for the man next to you to stop performing and start healing.

Men need a safe place to open up about real issues — a man contemplating divorce, a man walking away from his family, a man in real trouble. If he senses that other men in the room see themselves as being perfect, as having it all together, he clams up instead of speaking honestly.

A SAFE ROOM: HOW WE SPEAK IN A MEN'S GROUP

EVERY MAN GETS THE FLOOR

A men's group only works if it's safe. Safe doesn't mean comfortable — it means every man in the room has room to talk. No one man dominates the evening, and no one dodges it either. If a man is quiet, that's not permission to let him stay invisible; someone should open the door for him. If a man tends to talk a lot, that's not permission to take up all the air in the room. The group belongs to everyone in it, not to whoever talks the loudest or the longest.

Proverbs 18:2 says a fool “takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion.” A safe room protects against that. It's built so that a struggling man and a strong man have the same amount of space to speak — because on a given night, either one might be the one who needs to be heard.

NO RHETORIC — JUST THE BASICS

Whatever the subject is for the evening, stay on it. Don't dress up a comment to sound impressive. Don't turn a two-sentence thought into a speech. Rhetoric — polished, persuasive, performative speech — has a way of quietly making the room about the speaker's skill instead of about Christ.

Paul told the Corinthians he came to them “not with lofty speech or wisdom,” determined to know nothing among them except Jesus Christ and Him crucified (1 Corinthians 2:1-2). That's the pattern: plain speech, aimed at the actual subject, said in a way any man in the room — new believer or elder — can receive without needing a study guide to unpack it.

TWO QUESTIONS BEFORE YOU SPEAK

Before opening his mouth, every man in the group should quietly run his comment through two questions.

How does what I'm about to say help the other men in this room? Not: does it make me look wise, recovered, or spiritually ahead.

Ephesians 4:29 says our words should be “good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.”

How does what other men are saying help me? Listening isn’t a pause before your turn to talk — it’s part of the work. “As iron sharpens iron” (Proverbs 27:17) only happens if a man actually lets what another man says cut into his own life, rather than just waiting to respond.

Those two questions, asked honestly, filter out almost everything that doesn’t belong in the room: the bragging, the correcting, the showing off, the rabbit trails.

THE THIRD QUESTION: DOES IT POINT TO THE GOSPEL?

Underneath both of those is a bigger question that has to sit over everything said in the room; does this point to the gospel — to God, to Jesus Christ?

A comment can be true, interesting, even helpful in a general sense, and still miss the point of why the group exists.

The test isn’t just whether it was a good comment — it’s whether it pointed back to Christ and what He did.

Colossians 3:17 says whatever we do, in word or deed, do it in the name of the Lord Jesus. That includes a five-minute comment in the group circle. If what’s being said doesn’t lead back to Him — to the cross, to grace, to what Jesus is doing in a man’s life — it’s just talk, however well-intentioned.

THE BOTTOM LINE

A safe room, plain speech, and two honest questions before you talk — that’s what keeps a men’s group from becoming a stage and keeps it functioning as what it’s meant to be; men helping men get closer to Christ, one honest, unpolished sentence at a time.

SUPPORTING VOICES

John Piper — preaching on Galatians 6:14, Piper said to let our one boast, one joy, and one exultation be the cross of Christ.

Charles Spurgeon — on preaching Christ, Spurgeon said a sermon with no Christ in it is like a loaf of bread without any flour, and told the preacher to go home and not preach again until he had something worth preaching.

Tim Keller — Keller taught that because we're already loved and accepted in Christ, we don't have to do things just to build up our résumé or to make ourselves look good.

Andrew Murray — on humility as the root of all virtue, Murray called humility — entire dependence on God — the first duty and the highest virtue of the creature, and the root of every virtue. Elsewhere he wrote that “humility is nothing but the disappearance of self in the vision that God is all.”

Charles Spurgeon — “You will never glory in God till first of all God has killed your glorying in yourself.”

Charles Spurgeon — “He who boasts in himself is but a babe in Christ, if indeed he be in Christ at all — growing Christians think themselves nothing.”

Charles Spurgeon — the Holy Spirit's work is to turn our eyes from self to Jesus, because “we are nothing, but Christ is all in all.”

John MacArthur — on verbal pride, MacArthur points to Proverbs 27:2: “Let another praise you, and not your own mouth.”

John MacArthur — “The more you focus on yourself, the more distracted you will be from the proper path.”

Charles Stanley — “One of the greatest hindrances to communicating the gospel is personal pride,” since unbelievers are seldom offended by a Christian who humbly shares what Christ has done.

D.L. Moody — “If we hear a man talking about himself, we may be sure that he has not seen God.”

D.L. Moody — “Humility consists not in thinking poorly of ourselves but in not thinking of ourselves at all.”